

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 10, 2002

WHEAT PRODUCTION LOWEST IN NINE YEARS

Tennessee’s winter wheat production is forecast at 14.6 million bushels, down 21 percent from last year, according to a recent survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service. If realized, this will be lowest production since 1993 when 13.9 million bushels were produced. Acres expected to be harvested for grain, at 270,000, is also down 21 percent from 2001 and at the lowest level in 17 years. Another 160,000 acres will be used as a cover crop or harvested for hay and silage. The State’s average grain yield is forecast at 54 bushels per acre, unchanged from 2001. Tennessee growers seeded a total of 430,000 acres last fall, down 14 percent from the previous year. Less than ideal planting conditions during October and November caused seeding delays and emergence problems. The winter wheat crop progressed behind normal during April as wet, cool weather early in the month slowed development. The wheat crop suffered some minor freeze damage and excessive moisture caused yellowing of a few fields in West Tennessee. Favorable weather for the remainder of the month, however, allowed development to progress at a more normal pace. As of May 5, 2002, 81 percent of the crop has headed and was rated in mostly good condition.

U.S. WINTER WHEAT

Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.30 billion bushels, down 4 percent from 2001. This is the lowest production since 1978. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 43.1 bushels per acre, 0.4 bushels less than last year. Grain area totals 30.2 million acres, down 4 percent from last season. This is the lowest harvested acreage since 1917.

| WINTER WHEAT: TENNESSEE, SURROUNDING STATES, AND U.S., MAY 1, 2002 WITH COMPARISONS ¹ | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| State | Acreage Harvested | | Yield Per Acre | | Production | |
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2001 | 2002 | 2001 | 2002 |
| | 1,000 Acres | | Bushels | | 1,000 Bushels | |
| Arkansas | 970 | 800 | 52.0 | 53.0 | 50,440 | 42,400 |
| Georgia | 200 | 180 | 53.0 | 50.0 | 10,600 | 9,000 |
| Kentucky | 360 | 380 | 66.0 | 66.0 | 23,760 | 25,080 |
| Mississippi | 225 | 180 | 52.0 | 50.0 | 11,700 | 9,000 |
| Missouri | 760 | 760 | 54.0 | 55.0 | 41,040 | 41,800 |
| North Carolina | 470 | 470 | 39.0 | 47.0 | 18,330 | 22,090 |
| <u>TENNESSEE</u> | <u>340</u> | <u>270</u> | <u>54.0</u> | <u>54.0</u> | <u>18,360</u> | <u>14,580</u> |
| Virginia | 170 | 175 | 60.0 | 62.0 | 10,200 | 10,850 |
| United States | 31,295 | 30,174 | 43.5 | 43.1 | 1,361,479 | 1,300,726 |

¹ 2002 forecast, 2001 final.

AMPLE HAY SUPPLIES

Stocks of all hay on Tennessee farms totaled 809,000 tons on May 1, up 1 percent from the previous year and the second highest May 1 level since 1989. The Volunteer State produced a record hay crop in 2001 and hay supplies were also at a record high level going into the winter. Disappearance of hay from December 1, 2001 - May 1, 2002, totaled 3.33 million tons.